15

THE
Inconveniences of a long Continuance
Of the ſame
PARLIAMENT.

THAT there is a neceſſity of a Government among Mankind, is admitted by all wiſe men; but to convince mad men and fools of this, is too great a task. *Johannes Woolebius* in his Compendium, *Theolo. Chriſt.* ſays, that it is unworthy in a Chriſtian ſo much to ſeem to miſtruſt the Divine Authority of the Scripture, as to make any queſtion of it. It being a Principle ſo neceſſary to be believed, as it ought not to be brought into doubt by Diſputes. To the like purpoſe it may be ſaid that it is unworthy in an Engliſh Cummonwealths-man, to bring it into debate whether or no the Sovereignty of this Realm be in the King alone, diſ-joyned from any other perſons; and true it is, there are as yet but few, if any, that dare be ſo hardy, as poſitively to ſay otherwiſe, whatever their thoughts be, and though their Actions ſeem to look that way: And foraſmuch as the word Commonwealth hath been of late years for the moſt part applied to the Government when it is in the hands of many: It might not be impertinent to inſert here what a Commonwealth is. A Commonwealth therefore is a lawful Government of many Families, and that which unto them in Common belongeth; and the end and deſign thereof is, that the wicked be puniſht, and the good and juſt protected. So that it is as much, nay, rather more a Commonwealth, and tends more to Common good when the Government is in the hand of one man, than in the hands of many; and for this we have the general conſent of all great Politicians in paſt Ages, who after the tryal of all ſorts of Governments, and comparing the Conveniences and Inconveniences of each, have concluded that Government beſt for the generality of the people, when the Sovereign Power to Command was in one man, and not in many: For oftentimes even where a Tyrant hath Reigned, and he removed, and the Commonwealth changed into a popular State, the People have been ſoon ſenſible that the change hath been much for the worſe, and that inſtead of one Tyrant they had a multitude of Tyrants to oppreſs them. Yet the Diſſolution or Prorogation of a Parliament hath been of late lookt upon to be ſo high a violation of Right, and ſo great a point of miſ-government, as if thereby our Liberties were loſt, and our Lives and Eſtates ſubjugated to the Arbitrary Power and Pleaſure of our King; or elſe we falſely conclude it impoſſible that the King can be ſo wiſe as to Govern without their Counſels. To remove which miſtakes, and to quiet the minds of men miſled, theſe following Conſiderations and Collections out of Engliſh Hiſtory are offered to publick view, whereby it will be moſt apparent that not only the Proroguing but the frequent Diſſolving of Parliaments is abſolutely neceſſary for preſervation of Monarchy, our now eſtabliſht Government, and the beſt ſort of Government for the people of *England*, and moſt ſutable to their temper; in preſervation whereof, our own preſervation conſiſts. But the long continuance of one and the ſame Parliament, or the ſame Members in Parliament, which are both alike, is the moſt pernicious thing imaginable both to King and People.

It is neceſſary for preſervation of Monarchy, that Parliaments be often Diſſolved, becauſe nothing makes it more manifeſt in whom the Sovereign Power reſides; for it puts them in mind by what Authority they have their Being, whereas by a long Continuance they are apt to plead preſcription to their Seats, and think themſelves diſ-ſeized if removed thence, though by the ſame power that plac'd them there.

In former times, Parliaments in this Kingdom conſiſted only of ſome of the Nobility and wiſe men of the Nation, ſuch as the King pleas'd to Call; and the firſt time that ever the Commons of *England* were admitted to Parliament, was in the 16th Year of *Henry* the 1ſt. which Parliament was Aſſembled at *Saliſbury*, and it was ſo Aſſembled of the Kings own Pleaſure, not of any Obligation that by Law lay upon him ſo to do. And certain it is, the Kings of *England* were no ways obliged to Aſſemble Parliaments, or being aſſembled, to permit them to ſit during their own pleaſure, till of late Years, that ſuch vapours corrupted our Region with a deſtructive Contagion. By the Ancient Statutes of *E.* 3. whereby Parliaments were to be holden once a Year, and oftner if need were, cannot by any reaſonable conſtruction be intended, ſo much to

oblige the King to call a Parliament, as to oblige the Subject to attend being call'd, and this ſeems the rather to be ſo, for that thoſe Statutes being but briefly penned by a ſubſequent Statute of *R.* 2d. (as an Act explanatory of the former Acts) a penalty is impoſed upon every perſon having Summons to Parliament, that ſhould not come accordingly. But now by an Act of the 16th of his now Majeſties Reign, he was prevail'd upon to paſs it into a Law That Parliaments ſhould not be intermitted or diſcontinued above three years. However (God be thank'd) it is yet in the Kings power, that if when they are Call'd they behave themſelves not well, His Majeſty may, without violation of any Law, ſend them whence they came; and, I hope, it will never more be otherwiſe, leſt that if they had a grant of not being Diſſolv'd without their own conſent, they would do as thoſe did that had the like power. And ſure, it's no Soloeciſm that the like cauſe may have the like effect.

A Parliament of the Modern Conſtitution is without Controverſie very neceſſary and uſeful, if they intend that which properly belongs to them; the buſineſs of both Houſes being to conſult with, and adviſe the King in ſuch things as he ſhall require their advice in, and to repreſent to him publik grievances, ſuch as are real grievances, and not ſuch as every whimble pated fellow eſteems ſo; but they are not to think to compel the King, under the plauſible term of Addreſs, to exerciſe any point of Government, or to make any new Laws that he likes not of. And it is proper and peculiar to himſelf only to judg what advice is fit to be followed, and what to be rejected; for there may be ſome private Reaſon of State for his ſo doing, which might be inconvenient to be publickly known. This hath been the ancient ſetled practice, and under which this Kingdom hath long flouriſht, and it is not ſafe to alter it, for it being now the declining Age of the World, moſt Changes (violent ones eſpecially) are from good to bad, and from bad to worſt, and from worſt to ſtark naught.

Is not the advantage of Monarchy above the Government of many, apparent at this time to any ſeeing man, for, it His Majeſty, like the Main Maſt of a Ship, had not been the ſtay of all, and had not as it were parted the fray by the late Diſſolution of the Parliament, all the Ariſtocratical rigging and tackle of both Houſes; if it deſerves to be ſo called, had been torn in pieces by faction amongſt themſelves, and this poor Kingdom thereby ere this, might have been a ſecond time in our memory blown up by her own inbred Diviſions, and it is not without precedent, that Parliaments are alike infallible as the Pope, or his Colledg of Cardinals, and have given as ill advice, and done as ill things, and of late have been more troubleſome than ever.

If it ſhould be ſo that the advice of either or both Houſes of Parliament muſt of neceſſity be followed by the King, then would it not be properly an advice but a command in effect; and where in a Commonwealth the Sovereign power or Command is in more than in one, that Commonwealth is no longer a Monarchy, but is degenerated at beſt into an Ariſtocracy, the Sovereignty being thereby divided amongſt many, and if we judg impartially, it muſt be acknowledged that they that indeavour after that (*viz.*) that the Votes and Ordinances of the Houſe of Commons might have the force of Laws, are no leſs Enemies to the State than they that would introduce Popery, for in both Caſes it is but indeavouring to alter the Government; to prevent which fond and dangerous attempt, the frequent Diſſolving of Parliaments is very neceſſary.

Divers other Inconveniences will be prevented by frequent Proroguing and Diſſolving of Parliaments; for by that means the privilege of Parliaments will not over long protect the Members thereof to delay and defraud their fellow Subjects of their juſt and due Debts; which ſort of practice for many years paſt hath been a killing oppreſſion, when not only the Members themſelves made ill Uſe of that privilege, but many of them gave their Clerks Liberty to ſell blank Protections by the dozens, as the Pope doth his Indulgences. And moreover if any ſuch, or other like vitious man, ſhould by flattery and bribery get into the Parliament, a Diſſolution gives opportunity of diſcharging ſuch from having hand in ſo high a Truſt; and great reaſon ſuch ſhould be diſcharged; for how can it be expected that men unjuſt in their private concerns ſhould be otherwiſe in publick Adminiſtration, which they will always ſtrive to make ſubſervient to their bie-Intereſts?

By the long continuance of one and the ſame Parliament, it hath happened, that the Members thereof having long beheld the tempting, though forbidden fruit of Supremacy, they have not ſcrupled to grapple with the King for a ſhare of the Sovereignty; and moſt commonly when they are a little ſetled they ſtrive to ſpoil the King of his Prerogative to uſurp it to themſelves; and rather than fail of their deſigns, time hath been that they have involv'd the people of this Kingdom in a miſerable War and Deſtruction of each other, when the thing they ſeem'd to inſiſt on, was either of no moment at all to the people, or ſomething that had a very remote poſſibility of ever happening; whereby inſtead of preventing the miſchief, they drew it haſtily upon us. There are too many examples hereof in Hiſtory, whereof to name a few: Let it be Impartially conſider'd, and then judg if there was a juſtifiable Cauſe for the Inſolency of that Parliament in *Edw.* the 2d's time, who being ſet on by ſome Lords that envied *Gaveſtons* favour with that King, framed Articles of ſome trifling grievances to be preſented to the King, but

added

added thereunto, the King muſt baniſh *Gaveſton*, elſe they declar'd they would riſe in Arms againſt the King. An Action much to the credit of Parliaments indeed, that they to gratifie an envious Lord or two, would not ſtick to ſtir up the Plague of a Civil War in the bowels of their own Country, by engaging in a Rebellion againſt the King! And they proceeded ſo far that they murthered *Gaveſton* inſtead of bringing him to a fair and Legal Tryal, for no reaſon in particular that appears by *Bakers* Chronicle, other than that the King lov'd him, and that he was in more favour than they; and not long after they e'ne Depos'd the King, and yet no intrenchment upon the peoples Liberty or Property was committed by that King in all his Reign, and it is expreſly ſaid of him he took no baſe Courſes for raiſing money. And although being forc'd to reſign his Crown, he was content to live a prive Life, and did ſo very quietly, yet his Seditious Lords thought his Liberty too much favour for him, and caus'd him to be impriſon'd; and in carrying to Priſon he was moſt barbarouſly abuſed, for being taken from his Horſe, and ſet upon a Hillock, and there taking puddle water to ſhave him with, his Barber told him Cold water muſt ſerve for that time, whereat the miſerable King looking earneſtly upon him, told him; that whither they would or no, he would have warm water to waſh withal; and to make good his words, he let fall a ſhowre of tears: and being carried to Priſon, they lodg'd him in a Chamber over Carrion and dead Carkeſſes, thinking thereby to have poyſon'd him: But when they ſaw that would not do, a Letter was deviſ'd from a Lord to the Kings Keepers, blaming them, for giving him too much Liberty, and for not doing the ſervice that was expected from them, and in the end of the Letter was wrote this Line. *Edvardum Occidere nolite timere bonum eſt.* Which may be Engliſht either, It is good to kill *Edward*, do not fear it; or do not kill *Edward*, it is good to be afraid to do it: But they took it in the ſenſe intended, and moſt inhumanly murthered the King. And (to ſee the ficklenes of them) it is Recorded, that they that deſpis'd him when living ſo honour'd him being dead, that they could have found in their hearts to have made him a Saint.

It cannnot yet be forgot, nor will the ill effects a while be overcome of that Parliament, infamous for long, and of ſad and direful memory, How in the time of the beſt of Kings, when they all rul'd, there was no rule at all, but that upon pretence of removing evil Counſellors, they remov'd from us all happineſs, and overwhelm'd us with all the evils imaginable; and becauſe ſome people would make the world believe there's no preſervation againſt Popery but by means of a Parliament, be it remembred how poorly and ſneakingly the Parliament in Queen *Maries* days, became Apoſtates to the Proteſtant Religion, drew up a ſupplication to the King and Queen, wherein they ſhew'd themſelves very penitent for their former errors, and humbly deſired their Majeſties to intercede for them to Cardinal *Pool* the Popes Legate, and the Sea Apoſtolick, that they might be pardoned of all they had done amiſs. and be received into the boſom of the Church, being themſelves moſt ready to abrogate all Laws prejudicial to the Sea of *Rome*: That this is no Fable, they that liſt may read it in *Bakers* Chronicle. *fol.* 320.

Is it not apparent that what Execution hath been done upon the late Popiſh Plotters was by the Kings immediate Command? And the diſcoverers of Plotters, and proſecutors of Papiſts are to this day incouraged by his Majeſty. Were not the Lords in the Tower ſeveral times brought to *Weſtminſter-Hall*, by the Kings Command, in order to their Tryal, but the Houſe of Commons, were not, or would not be ready for it, unleſs they might pluck a plume from the Prerogative, or Peerage, to feather their own Caps withal? And whither they were not more ready to kindle Coals of contention, when even in the Houſe, not long ſince, ſome laid hands on their Swords to draw at each other; I leave the World to judg. Can any man then that loves the peace of his Country, be troubled at the Prorogation or Diſſolution of ſuch a Parliament.

It is indeed to be found in our *Engliſh* Chronicles, that one Parliament had the name of good, and that was in the Reign of *Edw.* the 3d. but it ſeems to be ſo called in deriſion only; for the ſame Author ſays, they wrought ill effects; to be more plain, there ſeldom or never was a long Parliament that did deſerve much commendation, or that was free from Faction: But that it was not otherwiſe, much may be imputed to the fault of the Electors, who take not right meaſures in their choice. And becauſe good Parliaments are very uſeful to His Majeſty and People, it is to be wiſht men would obſerve the right means to obtain ſuch, whenever it ſhould pleaſe His Majeſty to give another opportunity of a new Choice: and foraſmuch as many of the Commons of our late Parliaments were ſo vile as to take penſions for their Votes, as ſome of their own-Fellow-Members give out, which if true, in all likelyhood were given by ſome corrupt Miniſter of State to promote the intereſt and deſigns of ſome Forreign Prince, and ſome others of them were under very groſs errors touching Succeſſion, whither out of a real miſ-apprehenſion, or through a voluntary miſ-feaſance, it is not proper here to determine. Only this I ſay, it is ſomewhat ſtrange, that men that are all for Religion, will not truſt God Almighty himſelf with that Prerogative, though he gives us his word for it *That the hearts of Kings are in his Rule and Governance, and turneth them which way it pleaſeth him*; and in another place it is ſaid, *By me Kings Reign, and Princes do Decree*: But of this more perhaps hereafter. Some others are mightily inraged at their Diſſolution, becauſe it hath put them to charges at their new Elections, and

perhaps by the intermiſſion of a Parliament were forc'd to pay ſome of their debts. Theſe ſort of men, if they meet again, unleſs they are become Converts, will in all likelihood be doing miſchief; therefore it would be well, that not one ſuſpected of ſuch miſcariages ſhould be ever choſe again. There can be no Inconvenience in changing, for there is no Country or place but what hath ſeveral men fitter to be Parliament men than thoſe; and the new men may the better, and in more likehood act for the good of the Nation than the old ones; for theſe will meet without any private prejudice or pre-engagement in any Faction.

It cannot well be expected there ſhould ever be a good Parliament as long as men will be miſled to their choice by extravagancy of expence, therefore they would do well to conſider what will a belly full of Ale ſignifie in recompence of their peace, it will be but like *Eſau*'s ſelling his birth-right for a meſs of Pottage; neither ought the recommendation of any great man have any influence upon our choice; but the good qualifications of the perſon ought only to be reſpected.

Mens care in this concern is of very great Conſequence, for a great Politician ſays it, That it is more dangerous to the publick when there's an evil Council and a good King, than when there's an evil King, but a good Council; and that we may always have a good Council, above all other rules, Gods own direction for the choice of a Council in *Iſrael* ought to be followed, *Aſſemble unto me, ſaith he, ſeventy of the moſt ancient of the people, wiſe men fearing God*, Deut. cap. 1. It is of dangerous conſequence when the people have a ſlight opinion of the parts and abilities of their Council, therefore it is that old and not young men ought to be choſe into this great Council; for moſt men are apt to think ſlightly of thoſe of alike Age with themſelves, and though ſome young men may be good and vertuous, yet the heat and vigour of their youth and blood is apt to tranſport them into paſſion, and to too violent a proſecution of what their unripe and unexperienc'd Judgments dictate. *Solon* therefore forbad any young man to be admitted into the Senate, ſeem'd he never ſo wiſe.

To conclude. *God grant the Great Council the Parliament, whether the preſent or a new one, that when they meet next, they may remember it is great grace and favour in the King to Adviſe or Conſult with them at any time, and therefore may they not inſiſt upon what belongs not to them, but render to* Cæſar *the things that are* Cæſar's, *and to God the things that are God's, and then God will bleſs both our King and us.* Amen.

FINIS.

133577